

**Question on Notice
No. 839
Asked on 18 August 2004**

MR HAYWARD asked the Minister for Police and Corrective Services (Ms Spence)—

QUESTION:

As I understand a protocol has been proposed between the Department of Corrective Services and Disability Services Queensland on the management of prisoners with a disability, will she provide further details and outline what the Department of Corrective Services is doing for prisoners with a disability?

ANSWER:

The *Corrective Services Act 2000*, requires that consideration be given to the special needs of offenders, including the needs of prisoners with a disability.

Specifically, Section 119 of the Act requires that - when establishing a new prison - the accommodation and access requirements of prisoners with disabilities must be provided for. Section 189 of the Act requires that policies and procedures issued by the chief executive must take into account the special needs of offenders.

The provisions of the legislation which relate to special needs will be considered to determine if they can be improved upon during the forthcoming review of the Act. With regard to medical management of prisoners, all prisoners, including those with a disability, are assessed at the time of reception with regard to their individual needs.

The Department of Corrective Services and Disabilities Services Queensland have been working together in order to ensure that prisoners who have an assessed cognitive impairment are managed safely within the correctional system and are provided with appropriate services during imprisonment. Recent discussions with Disability Services Queensland have focussed on the inclusion of a set of strategic actions that will support these outcomes. These actions include working with criminal justice agencies to develop a shared screening instrument that will identify specific needs, establish common data collection processes and improve the Department of Corrective Services access to specialist disability consultancy advice.

In terms of infrastructure needs for disabled prisoners, all new correctional centres comply with the requirements for disabled access as set out in the Building Code of Australia. All new correctional centres since 1996 include accommodation for disabled prisoners.

In addition, the Department is undertaking a review of the *Corrective Services Act 2000*. As part of the review, the needs of prisoners with a disability will also be considered. It is important that offenders with a disability are treated equitably and given access to programs, services and support that address their needs.